

JUL 24 2000

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 81, No. 8 September 1999

## A Big Thank You to Congresswoman Barbara Lee

**W**e would like to thank Congresswoman Barbara Lee for her help on some very difficult Alameda Refuge issues.

One of the biggest problems involved in the creation of the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is contamination. The Refuge will be located on the old Alameda Naval Air Station. As with all military bases, there are significant amounts of toxics in the Air Station grounds. In particular, the land surrounding the largest wetland on the refuge is badly contaminated. This site, called the West Beach landfill wetlands, was the Air Station's dumping ground for most of its wastes. Now, the wetlands are home to a large Caspian Tern breeding colony and to many other water and land birds.

While the Navy hasn't finished investigating the site for toxics, we already know that there are large amounts of PAHs (polyaromatic hydrocarbons), PCBs, and many other unsavory chemicals. Some contamination has also been identified in the wetlands, themselves, undoubtedly seeping

in from the dumpsite.

The Navy is going to have to clean all this up but the question is what method will they chose. At present they have as a presumptive remedy what is called "capping" the site. This means putting over the toxics a layer of impervious clay so that water cannot enter the site nor, theoretically, leave it. Thus the contaminants on the site are supposedly immobilized and cannot migrate into the adjacent wetlands or the Bay.

However, because this site is so close to the Bay the groundwater level is extremely close to the surface. At highest tides groundwater may even reach the bottom of the landfill site. The ground beneath the landfill is composed

of very poorly compacted fill material (it was all part of the Bay itself not so many years ago) which makes toxic seeping into the Bay even that much more likely. We think that capping the site will not adequately address this seepage problem.

Furthermore, the levees surrounding the landfill (and it is only a few hundred yards, at most, from the Bay



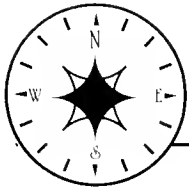
*Congresswoman Barbara Lee*

*Continued on page 5*

### Seed Sale

#### See page 9

Our next bird-seed sale pick-up will take place on September 24 and 25, 1999.



# Field Trips Calendar

**G**AS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

**SUNDAY AUGUST 29,  
TILDEN REGIONAL PARK,  
BERKELEY.**

See July Gull for details.  
Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936.  
E-mail: Rscalf@jps.net

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 4,  
LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS,  
MARIN.**

See July Gull for details.  
Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001.  
E-mail: Rlewis0727@aol.com.

**SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 5,  
STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

See October 3 trip for details.  
Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

**MONDAY SEPTEMBER 6,  
COASTAL SAN FRANCISCO WALK.**

See July Gull for details.  
**Please make reservations.**  
Leader: Harry Fuller (415) 668-8229. E-mail:  
harry\_fuller@zd.com

**WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 8,  
MINI-TRIP TO ALAMEDA  
SOUTH SHORE AND  
SURROUNDING AREAS.**

Anna Wilcox (510)-351-9301  
and Jean-Marie Spoelman of

Ohlone Audubon have kindly agreed to another season of their wonderful "mini-trips" to 10 important East Bay birding locations. For this first trip of the season, meet at 9:30 a.m. in Alameda at Broadway and Shoreline Drive. We will be looking for shorebirds and waterfowl. This trip often produces Clapper Rail and a dozen or more species of shorebirds. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one.

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 11,  
COASTAL SAN FRANCISCO.**

Meet at 8:a.m. in the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Avenue and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will bird in the park, at Lake Merced, and in Golden Gate National Recreation Area in search of warblers, flycatchers and vagrants. Bring lunch and be prepared for cold weather near the coast. Beginners welcome. Leader: Dan Murphy (415) 564-0074. E-mail: murphsf@world-net.att.net

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 18,  
ARROWHEAD MARSH, MARTIN  
LUTHER KING REGIONAL  
SHORELINE.**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. From Berkeley, take Hwy 880 (Nimitz) to the Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west to Doolittle Drive and turn right. Go a short distance and turn right again onto Swan Way. Turn left after a block and take the dirt road to the parking lot at the end. On this half-day trip, we expect to see returning shorebirds will be featured, and perhaps

Clapper Rail. We will bird the marsh and the new wetlands. Heavy rain cancels. Beginners welcome. Leader: Anthony Fisher (510) 658-8769.

**SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 19,  
GOLDEN GATE PARK +,  
SAN FRANCISCO.**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the Middle Lake parking lot, Golden Gate Park for this half-day trip. We will begin at Middle Lake and bird this area and the North Lake in search of fall migrants and vagrants. This will be the height of fall migration so anything will be possible. Our success or lack thereof at this location will determine where we go from there. Leader: Hugh Cotter (415) 931-7736.

**SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 26,  
COASTAL SAN FRANCISCO.**

Meet at 8:a.m. in the parking lot between South and Middle Lakes (Chain of Lakes) near the 41st Avenue and Lincoln Way entrance to Golden Gate Park. We will begin our birding in the park, then probably head to Lake Merced, followed by various destinations in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in search of warblers, flycatchers and vagrants. Bring lunch and be prepared for cold weather near the coast. Beginners welcome. Leader: Mark Eaton (415) 566-6767. E-mail: eaton@best.com

**SEPTEMBER 26-OCTOBER 1,  
SERVICE TRIP TO RAMSEY  
CANYON.**

See July Gull for details. Leader: Jeffrey Black (510) 526-7068.

## Field Trips Reports

**S**trybing Arboretum, June 6 and July 4, Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna: About 40 participants (beginners and regulars) and exactly 31 species on each trip, highlight being 2 quail chicks in July. **Hayward Shoreline**, June 11, 1999, Bob Lewis reports: "The 'aren't they cute' trip did not disappoint, with Barn Swallows in the nest, and just-hatched American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts learning to swim and hunt. Special additions to the list included a few Least Terns, a Snowy Plover on the salt pond, and a Clapper Rail hurrying across a ditch." 10 participants. **Leona Heights**, June 12, 1999, Rusty Scalf reports a nice trip with MacGillivray's Warbler still present. 21 participants. **Yuba Pass and Sierra City**, June 19, 20, 1999, Peter Allen's partial report: "Very enjoyable trip. High point (among others): In Sierra Valley, after another group reported several sightings of Gray Flycatcher (a prize bird), we were unable to find any. As we began our retreat (skunked, defeated, humiliated), someone spotted a nest, two feet off the ground in a young Jeffrey Pine Tree. Sitting on the nest was a small flycatcher, showing only the tip of the bill, the top of the head, and tip of the tail. All field marks checked; nest checked: Gray Flycatcher!" About 18 participants. **Presidio**, July 10, 1999. Harry Fuller reports a great turn-out for an educational trip that promised no vagrants, a fine chance to study/hear bird calls. 32 participants.

### **SATURDAY OCTOBER 2, HAWK HILL, MARIN COUNTY.**

Hawk Hill in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) is the premier hawk watch location in the west. Each fall, about 20,000 hawks fly over or near Hawk Hill, and over two hundred volunteers engage in hawk counting, banding, telemetry and other research programs. Enjoy the majesty of the various species of hawks that migrate through the Bay Area as Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO) Day Leader and Docent Stefanie Arthur discusses the mission and work of GGRO and points out the finer details of raptor identification. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the middle platform of Hawk Hill (Battery 129). From Berkeley, take the Richmond bridge to 101 south. Exit at the last entrance before the Golden Gate Bridge. Turn left at the stop sign, then right into the GGNRA. You will be on Conzelman Road. Drive up to the top of the hill (at which point the road is one way downhill - don't go downhill), turn around and park. Walk up to Hawk Hill via the gated fire road. From San Francisco, take the first exit after the Golden Gate Bridge, which is Alexander. Turn left and drive under the freeway. Turn left, then right into the GGNRA. You will be on Conzelman Road. See Berkeley directions. Rain cancels. Heavy fog may make viewing difficult. Bring lunch, liquids, sunscreen, hat. Layered clothing advisable. Trip will end at about 2:00. Parking limited so come early and carpool if possible.

Leader: Stefanie Arthur (415) 587-9282.

### **SUNDAY OCTOBER 3, STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

### **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 13, MINI TRIP TO EAST BAY SHORELINE.**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the large dirt parking lot next to the Seabreeze Market at the intersection of Interstate 80 and University in Berkeley. Take

Interstate 80 to the University exit and go west towards the marina. We will bird the nearby mudflats for shorebirds, then probably caravan to Point Isabel and other shoreline spots. Lunch optional. Heavy rain cancels. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9501 and Jean-Marie Spoelman.

### **Plan Ahead:**

- 1)** Saturday October 16, San Mateo Coast with Alan Hopkins.
- 2)** December 11-12, Gray Lodge/Sacramento Wildlife Refuges w/ Steve and Renee Margolin.

Trips marked with a (S) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a (\*). Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger (even if a trip is not marked with an (\*), if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.

# Martin Luther King Jr. Seashore Park And Arrowhead Marsh

by Jean Albrecht Lucken, Education Chair

Since November '98, I've pursued my committee position like a clapper rail in Arrowhead Marsh, quietly, with measured steps and just a few squawks. I have not contacted the membership previously, choosing to wait until I had something significant to report.

I had to decide who was to be educated and with what type of program. Inspired by John Poole's successful Chickadee program, and buoyed by my own experience as a teacher, I decided to concentrate on introducing Audubon's goals to public school children and teachers. I wanted to create a program of substance whose impact might propel an ongoing support of Audubon's goal to preserve our wetlands and our wildlife. The board approved and supported this effort.

Just as my self-imposed agenda threatened to overwhelm me, Art Feinstein asked me to meet with him. After years of legal deliberations, Audubon and other litigants had won their law suit against the Port of Oakland for illegally filling marshland at the Oakland Airport. To receive its share of the money, Audubon had to present an acceptable educational plan for MLK /AM. I welcomed this focused challenge.

We wanted to expose a significant number of teachers, students, and parents to the MLK/AM experience. We wanted teachers to witness the exquisite interaction of wildlife in its natural habitat and to see a bird magnified in all its glory through a pair of binoculars/scope. We wanted teachers, especially those without science backgrounds, to recognize how easily "birds" can

be integrated into the existing subjects of reading, language arts, math, and art. To accomplish this, teachers will attend a workshop(s) and a fieldtrip(s) offered by Alameda College and conducted by John Luther, a faculty member. We feel very fortunate to have such a highly qualified instructor. At these sessions, teachers will discuss, develop and receive multi-subject curriculum materials for classroom use. At a later date, these trained teachers will return with their informed classes to MLK/AM, in a school bus provided by Audubon. Prior to the field trip, the teacher or a docent/volunteer will give a slide presentation of MLK/AM to the class.

Follow-up activities (assemblies, PTA meetings, displays) will encourage teachers/students/parents to visit the MLK/AM as small groups or individually. To make this a reality, we are selecting elementary schools located near the wetlands and close to public transportation. Also, we hope to have an identifiable volunteer Audubon guide(s) at MLK/AM to answer questions and share a scope with the public on the first Saturday of each month from September to April. I know that many of you regularly show and share with the public at MLK/AM and other places. Would you consider signing up for just one Saturday a year?


Many people are working to make this program succeed. Strong support comes from our

Education coordinator, Amy Mayeno, who has been involved in this program's development and who will divide her time equally between MLK/AM and

## Wilson's Warbler Sightings Wanted!

Anyone sighting a color-banded Wilson's Warbler in the Tilden Nature Area in August, September, or early October, please report your sighting to me relative to an ongoing study of post-breeding dispersal. Please report band combination (one aluminum, two colored plastic bands), location (most likely around and upslope from the Nature Center entrance), and whether banded bird was accompanied by a second bird. All sightings greatly appreciated. William M. Gilbert, Ph.D. (510-222-7860, e-mail: [wmglbrt@aol.com](mailto:wmglbrt@aol.com)). 

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge. Kim Cranney, an accomplished photographer, has almost finished a slide presentation for MLK/AM, at no charge to Audubon. Committee member, Barbara Hakala, has contributed delightful insights into the keen interest of young children in birding as witnessed at her Lafayette childcare center. Did you know that some five-year olds love to snuggle inside a small tent, listen to taped bird songs outside and then scream out the bird's name? What fun! We're surrounded by children who already recognize and respect birds. Together, let's see how many more children we can reach.

**We Plan to Succeed! We'd Like You to Be a Part of Our Success! Volunteers of All Kinds Needed. No Job Requires an Expert! To Volunteer Call Amy Mayeno 644-1121.** 

# Thank You

*Continued from page 1*

and is even close in some places) are fragile. If we suffer a series of El Nino years in a row with storms and high tides, the levees may breach in places and this too would allow these toxics to enter the Bay even if capped.

Therefore, we believe that the best solution for the remediation of these toxics is to remove them completely from the refuge site. This may be a more costly alternative for the Navy and they may be reluctant to adopt such a measure. It was our fear that they might not even consider it as an alternative. We explained our concerns to Congresswoman Lee and she very kindly reflected our concerns by sending a letter to the Navy asking that they consider the removal of the contaminants as an alternative when deciding how to deal with the toxics issue.

The letter brought results and the Navy has committed itself to considering removal as an option.

An interesting fact about the Alameda Refuge is that 31 acres of the refuge are in San Francisco County. Yes, the wetlands and waters around Alameda were filled so enthusiastically that before they knew it they were filling the bay into San Francisco County. In fact, those 31 acres include the rich Westside Wetlands adjacent to the toxic landfill. Since those 31 acres are in Nancy Pelosi's congressional district we also asked her to sign the letter and are pleased to report she did. We send thanks to Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi who continues to be a friend to wildlife issues in San Francisco Bay and nationally.

Another important issue facing the refuge is human disturbance of the wildlife inhabiting the refuge. Especially during the Least Tern nesting season it is important that the nesting colony be free from human disturbance. The poor Terns have enough problems getting sufficient food for their babies and fending off attacks from their natural predators such as hawks.

So it was with great concern that we heard rumors about people jumping the low, 4-foot, fence that borders the refuge on its East Side. Then, on the evening of May 22, over 60 cars crashed through the fence protecting the refuge in order for their drivers to see fireworks being set off in San Francisco. This was terribly dangerous for the Terns. This event occurred just as they were beginning to nest and it may have delayed their nesting events. If it had happened later in the summer there would have been Least Tern chicks on the concrete over which the cars were driving and there might have been direct killing of Tern chicks.

Once again we sought help from Congresswoman Lee. Until the refuge land is turned over to the US Fish and Wildlife Service the US Navy is responsible for the protection of the Tern colony. Clearly their efforts to protect the refuge were inadequate. We asked Congresswoman Lee if she would write a letter to the Navy expressing concern for the safety of the Tern colony. She agreed to do so and thanks to her letter, and our own expressions of concern to the Navy, the fence is now being frequently patrolled by security

## Donations

### **Peregrine Falcon**

(\$500 or more):

Tom Heffelfinger  
Richard Bachenheimer

### **Clapper Rail**

(\$100 or more):

D. B. Luten

### **Gifts** (under \$100):

Blair F. Fuller, Ruth M. Doty,  
Leslie Lethridge, Shirley J.  
Hagens, and Janet E. Beeler.

### **In Memoriam:**

Sessions, Bonnie Blacklaw,  
Joyce L. and George H. Miller,  
and Duana G. and James M.  
Brauch in memory of Tim  
Brauch.

George Homem in memory of  
Roy Petersen.

Majorie A. and Bernard J.  
Feldman, in memory of  
Mildred and Wilson Kee.

The Society Welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities of for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

guards. We hope the Least Terns feel more secure.

We send our thanks to Congresswoman Barbara Lee for her concern for the California Least Tern and for the many other species inhabiting the Alameda NWR, and we thank her for her assistance in helping protect them. We would also like to thank Ying Lee, Congresswoman Lee's Legislative Aide, who help make these letters possible.



# San Francisco Airport Proposes Unprecedented Bay Fill

Citing the increasing number of delayed flights, the San Francisco Airport has proposed the largest amount of Bay fill in more than 30 years.

In the 1960's, developers proposed leveling San Bruno Mountain for the purpose of filling San Francisco Bay for development. That proposal aroused such opposition that the State legislature passed the McAteer-Petris Act which established the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and gave it, in 1968, the mandate and authority to preserve San Francisco Bay.

Until the Act was passed, Bay

fill had been a fairly common occurrence and over one third of the Bay's historic open waters had been lost. It had been filled with earth and developed for agriculture and urban uses. Large parts of the Bay were also diked off (separated from the Bay by levees) and made into salt ponds used for salt production.

But since 1968 and the passage of the Act, Bay fill has essentially come to a halt. Small Bay fills have been permitted because the mandate of BCDC is not only Bay preservation but also economic development as long as it is only for the minimum Bay fill possible. However, because BCDC usually insists that for every loss of open

water there be a corresponding increase of Bay water elsewhere (this is called mitigation) the Bay has actually slightly increased in size since 1968.

With that as a short history, we come to the present day Airport proposal. Anyone flying into SFO (San Francisco Airport) knows that delays are likely on cloudy/foggy days. The Airport is using that fact to claim the need to increase its runway configuration so as to allow more planes to land even in bad weather. Furthermore, having decided to fill the Bay to solve its congestion problem, the Airport also decided to fix the airport noise problem surrounding communities experience by putting even more fill into the Bay. This would allow planes to take off further out into the bay, and thus further away from the local communities (San Francisco airplane noise activists believe such a strategy will increase noise problems in San Francisco itself). In all, the Airport wants to fill about 600 acres of Bay (a little less than one square mile) in order to solve the time delay problem and another 700-800 acres (a little more than one square mile) to solve its noise problem.

In total, the Airport wants to fill about two square miles of Bay waters. This is an extraordinary, unacceptable amount of fill! Furthermore, it's a slippery slope once even one large fill project in the Bay is accepted. This project could set a terrible precedent for other "public service" projects. Will we also fill square miles of

## Announcing Fall Monterey Pelagic Trip

Saturday, October 23, 1999

Golden Gate Audubon and Shearwater Journeys team up to offer GGAS members a pelagic trip to the Monterey Bay. October is a good time to look for shearwaters, storm-petrels and alcids. Mammal sightings have included humpback and blue whales, common, white-sided, and northern right-whale dolphins, Dall's, and harbor Porpoise.

The GGAS discount price for this trip on Monterey Bay is \$62.00. Due to the need to reserve the boat in advance, your payment can not be refunded.

We Will meet at Sam's Fishing Shop on Monterey's Fisherman's Wharf at 7:00 a.m., the boat departs promptly at 7:30. Bring food, and clothing appropriate for a cool and possibly splashy day. More details will be forwarded with your reservation confirmation.

To reserve your place send a check for \$62.00, your phone number, mention that you are a member of GGAS, and a self addressed stamped envelope to: Shearwater Journeys P.O. Box 190 Hollister, CA 95024.

For more information please call only Alan Hopkins at (415) 664-0983

Bay for the Oakland Airport expansion or how about expanding HWY 101 by another couple of lanes from San Francisco south (filling many more miles of bay) because traffic is slow? Where does one stop?

Unfortunately, the McAteer-Petris Act, while prohibiting most large fills, has a special exemption for airport expansion. Such expansion is not a slam-dunk, however. The Airport must prove that its expansion is necessary for regional air traffic needs. GGAS and other environmental groups are pressing the regulatory agencies such as the MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) to study this issue and MTC has reinstituted the Regional Airport Planning Commission (RAPC) to undertake just such a study. Perhaps other transportation alternatives, such as high-speed trains, can provide the same services as an expanded SFO. We'll know inside of a year the results of that study.

Whatever the result of that study, all of us still need to consider the question of whether convenience at the airport is worth the loss of two square miles of San Francisco Bay.

There is one other very interesting and exceptional element to the Airport proposal. Usually mitigation takes place on a one to one or two to one ratio; i.e. for every acre of bay filled two acres of bay must be restored. The Bay Area Audubon Council and GGAS believes that mitigation must be at least at a two to one ratio because it is very difficult to

recreate a natural environment, and to provide all the functions of a habitat that was destroyed.

In this case, the Airport, undoubtedly recognizing that the amount of fill it is proposing is unprecedented has proposed an unprecedented amount of mitigation. It has proposed that as mitigation for filling the Bay it will spend at least two hundred million dollars (the Airport runway expansion project as a whole is projected to cost two billion dollars) and will buy all of the Cargill salt ponds that line the South Bay. These salt ponds, between 25,000 and 30,000 acres in size, were all once tidal wetlands and were part of the Bay. They were separated from the Bay by dikes starting in the mid-1800s and such diking continued until the 1960s.

Restoring these salt ponds to tidal action and to the Bay waters would return to the Bay about 45 square miles of Bay. This is quite an astonishing amount of mitigation. A recent independent scientific study which has found great support in the environmental and academic community (of which we will talk more next month) has proposed restoring these salt ponds to tidal marsh (keeping about one-third as salt ponds to provide shorebird habitat).

While restoring these salt ponds is high on the list of things that need to be done to improve the wetland habitats of San Francisco Bay, as the Executive Director of BCDC, Will Travis, has said, "You don't buy a permit with mitigation proposals." We will

## **Tree Houses and Bird Houses to Benefit Nature Programs for Children**

**G** GAS will be participating in Strybing Arboretum's up a tree program this fall to benefit children's educational program at the arboretum.

On Friday, September 24 Strybing will launch its first annual Ground Tour of tree houses and bird-houses designed by top Bay Area architects and artists. For ten days, two acres will be uplifted by arboreal hideaways.

keep you informed on this issue as events play out. The next major event is an Environmental Impact Statement/Report (federal document/state document) prepared by the FAA and the City of San Francisco on the Airport proposal. At the same time the RAPC report will be issued. All of this is many months off. When the time comes look for action alerts and articles in the Gull asking you to write letters on this issue. Stay tuned.

## Save the Quail – Summer Update

**T**he Save the quail campaign officially took flight with the first two committee meetings in June and July. The meetings were well attended by motivated people with a passion to save San Francisco's Quail.

A major component of keeping a viable keep the population of quail in Golden Gate Park was realized in a meeting with the Charlotte Cagan Director of the Strybing Arboretum Society, Don Mahoney Strybing's horticulture manager, along with Helen McKenna and Allan Ridley from GGAS. When the plight of the quail was explained to Ms. Cagan, she agreed to help by providing an area for quail habitat in the Arboretum. This was the most important step to save the quail in Golden Gate Park; we are extremely grateful to be allowed to have this project in Strybing Arboretum. The Arboretum's mission is in presenting diverse plants and trees to the public and not saving birds, especially ones that eat plants. A work party to create habitat in Strybing will be held on October 23, please join us!

David Graves has been creating the Ishi Project at McLaren Park. David looks to incorporate quail biology and habitat restoration into grade school curriculum. On July 17, Friends of McLaren Park President Franco Mancini, led a group of us around the park to discuss potential habitat restoration sites.

As the breeding season approached quail sightings continued to come in from the Presidio and Strybing Arboretum

in Golden Gate Park. Many people reported seeing males and females paired for nesting. A May 7, check of the habitat restoration area at Fort Funston found that the quail had returned.

The Save The Quail committee determined that a media campaign could be a great help in our effort to save the quail. The focus of the campaign was to make people aware of the plight of the quail, and to ask for the public's assistance in locating unknown populations in San Francisco. Mark Weaver contributed his time and expertise in excellent high quality video footage of the quail in Strybing. Steve Ginsberg and Susan Coughlan provided media contacts. While the media response was not great, the story was picked up by the Chronicle's Glen Martin. "A Quail Quandary" ran with a beautiful color photo of a male quail in Strybing Arboretum. The story was all that we could have hoped for, and the response was outstanding. Through the article we learned of quail populations in the San Francisco Golf Club, The Olympic Club, and there were also reports of quail near Mt. Davidson, Glen Canyon Park, and Diamond Heights. One quail was seen near Stern Grove and was reported by numerous observers. Other reports were from near the Polo Field, and the Oak Woodlands in Golden Gate Park. The two most unusual reports were from the Mission District and Russian Hill.

This year's breeding season was a limited success. On June 20, a group of at least ten quail chicks was found at Fort Funston.

## You Can Help Save The Quail!

Save Saturday, October 23

**V**olunteers are needed to join a work party to create more quail habitat in Strybing Arboretum. The Strybing Arboretum Society has graciously agreed to help to save Golden Gate Park's last population of quail by providing an area to create more quail habitat. If you are interested in saving the quail mark October 23 on your calendar. If you can't make the 23rd, donations to offset the expense of plantings would be greatly appreciated.

Make checks to the Golden Gate Audubon Society for **Save The Quail!** Mail to the GGAS office (see back cover for address).

For more information call Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983, [ash@sfo.com](mailto:ash@sfo.com)

Michael Chassé, Josiah Clark, Rich Ferrick and Harry Fuller all followed the progress of at least two quail families in the Presidio. The breeding season in Strybing Arboretum was very disappointing with only one of the females producing a clutch of chicks. The day the chicks were first seen there were six chicks, but within two days only two remained.

While the breeding season in the Arboretum is not what we hoped for, there are some reasons for optimism. In just a few months **Save the Quail** has gathered a great deal of interest and momentum. We are beginning to get help from Strybing Arboretum Society, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and lots of folks like you! If you can help call Alan Hopkins (415)664-0983.



Birdseed sale pick-up on September 24 and 25

It's fall and our wintering birds are back again and hungry. If you want to help them out here's your chance. Our next birdseed sale pick-up will take place on September 24 and 25, 1999. If you wish to order seed, please fill out the adjacent seed-order form and mail it to us with a check made out to GGAS, with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Orders should be received in the GGAS office by Thursday, September 16. We will have extra seed and bird feeders on hand so if you didn't order enough seed, or forgot to order any seed at all, come on down to the office. We'll have the seed you need!

Pick-up of seed will take place Friday, September 24, 3-6 PM and Saturday, September 25, 9 AM-12 Noon at the Golden Gate Audubon Office in Berkeley.

Most of our native birds such as chickadees, nuthatches, white-crowned sparrows, purple and house finches and woodpeckers, favor sunflower seeds. Goldfinches, pine siskins and chickadees also love Niger (thistle seed). We urge you to consider using these seeds alone. We will, of course, continue to carry our Volkman mixed seed (sunflower and millet) which also attracts doves and English Sparrows.

Our Volkman Premium Wildbird seed and GGAS Own Mixed seeds are the best available. They contain no waste seed and have been cleaned of debris and dust so you get what you pay for. If you have a question about which kind of seed to buy give us a call at the GGAS Office, 510-843-2222.

We're pleased to say that the prices for all our seeds are the same very reasonable prices as for our last sale. Our price for Niger seed (thistle seed for goldfinches and pine siskins) is probably the best in town.

Our Duncraft Feeder is a 16" long tube seed-feeder. We also have some squirrel proof feeders that have a 1" wire mesh surrounding the feeder that keeps out squirrels and larger birds, letting in only our songbirds, finches and sparrows. As always, we have a variety of hummingbird feeders.

We are also offering GGAS hats. These hats are black, baseball-style caps adorned with our now famous GGAS logo. They really are quite lovely and you'll enjoy wearing them. These hats cost \$15. Please add \$2 for postage and handling if you want us to mail them to you.

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Remember, your purchases provide an important source of income to GGAS, allowing us to continue our conservation, education and field-trip activities. We look forward to seeing you on seed sale day.

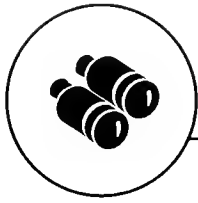
GGAS BIRD SEED AND FEEDER SALE  
ORDER AND PREPAY BY SEPTEMBER 16, 1999  
PICK UP SEPTEMBER 24 AND 25, 1999

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE (DAY) \_\_\_\_\_ (EVENING) \_\_\_\_\_

SEED	QUANTITY	AMOUNT
GGAS' OWN MIX	20 lbs. \$ 9.00	
Contains only red and white millet and black oil sunflower seed	50 lbs. \$19.50	
VOLKMAN PREMIUM	20 lbs. \$ 8.50	
WILD BIRD SEED	50 lbs. \$18.50	
Composed of only red and white millet - no sunflower seeds (no squirrels)		
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER SEED	25 lbs. \$11.00	
	50 lbs. \$20.00	
BLACK OIL SUNFLOWER CHIPS	25 lbs. \$22.00	
(No waste!)		
NIGER (THISTLE) SEED	5 lbs. \$8.00	

FEEDERS		
DUNCRAFT SEED FEEDER 16"	\$28.00	
THISTLE FEEDER	\$10.00	
SQUIRREL PROOF FEEDER	\$46.16	
HUMMINGBIRD (window)	\$10.00	
HUMMZINGER (saucer style)	\$15.50	
HUMMINGBIRD (16 oz. bottle)	\$12.00	
SUET CAGE (2" x 5" x 5")	\$ 5.50	
SUET CAKE (11.75 oz.)	\$ 2.75	
GGAS Hat	\$15.00	
GGAS T-shirt	\$10.00	

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Be sure to include your check with a stamped and self-addressed envelope.	8.25% SALES TAX	
	TOTAL	
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May 27 - June 24, 1999

June began with still more Sierra snow and a week of cool temperatures throughout Northern California. Mid-month brought a more typical summer pattern, with warmer interior temperatures and fog moving in on the coast. The Wood Warbler department wins the category-of-the-month award, with the only four review species sighted. This column covers less than the usual one-month interval due my departure for several weeks' birding and other adventures over several parts of Australia, but any missed reports will be included in the next column.

## Hérons to Ducks

An alternate-plumaged Little Blue Heron was found at Odello Pond, Carmel R. Mouth, MTY, June 19 (JB). Rare on the coast were 9 White-faced Ibis at Zmudowski State Beach, MTY, June 7 (MPRBA). Seven of this species (possibly some of the first group) were near Moon Glow Dairy, MTY, June 20 (MRBPA). One late Tundra Swan was at Arcata, HUM, June 6 (C), and another was seen at Marble Hotsprings Rd., PLU, June 13 (ME, EPr). Two Redheads were on ponds at Ironhouse Sanitary District, CC, June

3, the latest date for this species in the county (DW fide SG.) An Oldsquaw remained at Moss Landing Harbor, MTY, as of May 28 (MPRBA), another was at the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, June 11-13 (DA, LL), and a third was on private property, ALA, June 13 (TR).

## Hawks to Nighthawks

A nesting pair of light-phased Swainson's Hawks with a nearly full-grown juvenile was found at Marsh Creek Reservoir, CC, June 22, representing only the 3<sup>rd</sup> county breeding record (SG). A Golden Eagle seems to have become a regular visitor to Arrowhead Marsh, MLK Regional Shoreline area, ALA, June 2 (CP). On this latest occasion, it attempted to feed on American Avocet chicks and was promptly mobbed by 10 adult avocets.

A Laughing Gull was spotted near Gualala, SON, June 21 (MP, DE). Single Franklin's Gulls were seen at Crescent City, HUM, May 30 (B), from Moss Landing, MTY, May 28 (MRPBA), and from Pigeon Pt., SM, June 11 (RT). As of June 10, at least 4-5 chicks had been produced by the 2-3 pairs of Heermann's Gulls that had been reported nesting on an island in Roberts Lake, MTY, in mid-May (MPRBA). This event is the first successful nesting of this species in CA. A Glaucous Gull was at Crescent City, HUM, May 30 (RS). Late Black-legged Kittiwakes continued along the coast, especially in SM county, with high counts of 74 flying over north over Pigeon Pt. June 11 (RT) and 51 at the Pescadero Creek mouth June 6 (AJ). Smaller numbers were reported from MRN, SF, and SON counties.

A Common Tern was found at Pier 98, SF, May 29 (ASH), and another was seen at Shell Beach, SM, June 16 (MH). The alternate-plumaged Arctic Tern first reported in late April at Hayward Regional Shoreline, ALA, was still around on June 1 (JR) and by June 18 it was found to be incubating 2 eggs (SG). Since there were no other Arctic Terns in the area, it was

assumed to be breeding with a Forster's Tern, and if so, may be the first recorded occurrence of this particular sister-species hybridization. Hayward Regional Shoreline also continued to host Black Skimmers, with 1-3 birds reported from May 27-June 1 (KH, CW, SJ, JR). Another Black Skimmer flew past Pigeon Pt., SM, June 11 (RT), with a second individual at Elkhorn Slough, MTY, June 20 (MRPBA). Most unusual for the location was a female Lesser Nighthawk at the Big Sur R., AMSP, MTY, May 29-30, where a male had been reported on May 22 (MPRBA).

## Swifts to Wood Warblers.

The Chimney Swift reported last month was still at AMSP, MTY, May 30 (MPRBA). One to two male Black-chinned Hummingbirds were seen at Piper Slough, CC, June 2-3 (DW), and, there were 2-3 males along with a female on a nest there June 3, which may be first breeding record for CC county (SG). Another Black-chinned Hummingbird at was at an unusual mountain location at Bassett, SIE, June 13 (ME, EPr), and an individual on Gazos Creek Rd., SM, June 18 is thought to be a second county record (AK). Four-to-five Costa's Hummingbirds were in Soberanes Canyon, Garrapata State Park, MTY, June 5 and 10 and a male was reported from BSOL, MTY, June 11 (MPRBA).

There was a Hammond's Flycatcher at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, Moss Beach, SM, May 30 (RT). Two Eastern Kingbirds were reported, one at Samoa, HUM, June 3,5,6 (DEL, O) and the other near the B Ranch, PRNS, MRN, June 5 (RS). Two Plumbeous Vireos were seen at Wildrose Canyon, MON, June 5 (PM). A Red-eyed Vireo was in Trinidad, HUM, May 29 (I) and another was found at the Coyote Point County Park museum, SM, June 3 (RT). What may be the second Northern CA record for a Cactus Wren occurred at Yellowjacket Springs, MON, June 6 (PM). An extremely late Ruby-

**Abbreviations for Observers:** DA, Dan Ashford; JB, Jeff Barnum; B, Barron; MB, Mike Bartner; GB, George Bing; EB, Ellen Bluestein; C, Cariss; OC, Ore Carmi; LC, Les Chibana; JC, Josiah Clark; HC, Hugh Cotter; TE, Todd Easterla; ME, Mark Eaton; AE, Art Edwards; AEI, Al Eisner; DE, Doug Ellis; ME, Feighner Mike; DF, David Fix; SGe, Steve Gerow; SG, Steve Glover; H, Hazzard; MH, Marilyn Hemmeter; KH, Kevin Hints; ASH, Alan S. Hopkins; LH, Lisa Hug; Hu, Hunter; RL, Richard Irwin; I, Irwin; AJ, Al Jaramillo; SJ, Sheila Junge; AK, Anna Kopitov; RL, Rick Lehadour; PL, Phil Levendorf; LL, Leslie Lieurance; L, Luther; DM, BM, Brian McIntosh; Dave McKenzie; KM, Kevin McKereghan; PM, Peter Metropulos; TN, Todd Newberry; O, Ogan; EP, Ed Pandolfino; MP, Mike Parmeter; CP, Courtenay Peddle; JP, JD Phillips; EPr, Eric Preston; JR, Jean Richmond; AR, Andrew Rush; TR, Tom Ryan; PS, Paul Saraceni; CS, Claire Shirvintin; DSI, Dan Singer; S, Slauson; RS, Rich Stallcup; SSB, Sandra Steurer-Bessler; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; LT, Larry Tunstall; PW, Peggy Westmoreland; AW, Alan White; JW, Jerry White; DW, Denise Wight; CW, Cam Wolff; NW, Ned Wynn.

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others:** ALA, Alameda; AMSP, Andrew Molera State Park; BSOL, Big Sur Ornithology Lab; CC, Contra Costa; DN, Del Norte; ED, El Dorado; HUM, Humboldt; LAK, Lake; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MON, Mono; MTY, Monterey; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; PLA, Placer; PLU, Plumas; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SIE, Sierra; SIS, Siskiyou; SON, Sonoma; TUO, Tuolumne.

crowned Kinglet was along Pomponio Creek Rd., SM, May 31 (RT). A Sage Thrasher was found in an uncommon coastal location at Little R., HUM, May 27 (H).

Reports of rare Wood Warblers were definitely on the upswing this period (see chart). The **Blue-winged Warbler** (*Vermivora pinus*) is reported to be a first SON county record. One of its sister species, the **Golden-winged Warbler** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), also a bird of the Eastern U.S., is in serious decline due in part to hybridization with the aforementioned Blue-winged Warbler. According to an article in the Spring, 1999, *Birdscope* published by the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, the USFWS has begun a Golden-winged Warbler status assessment because the species has declined by 7.6% each year since 1966 in the Northeast. This task is difficult because hybrids can sound like either of their parent strains, so that visual examinations are essential. In CA, most spring records are from the Southern CA deserts, and there are few records from Northern CA (Small, 1994). The **Yellow-throated Warbler** (*Dendroica dominica*), is a bird of the Midwestern and SE U.S. and a very rare transient in CA (Small, 1994). The **Mourning Warbler** (*Oporornis philadelphia*) normally inhabits the Northeastern U.S. and SE Canada and is an extremely rare spring transient, with almost all Northern CA records from coastal areas (Small, 1994).

## Tanagers to Grackles

There was a Summer Tanager at the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, May 28-29 (RL, fide KM) and another at Tyce City, HUM, June 2 (I). A Brewer's Sparrow, a rare migrant west of the Sierras (McCaskie et al, 1988), was at the Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN, June 15 (LL), and a second bird was found at Campbell Cove, Bodega, SON, June 20 (MP). Up to 3 Black-chinned Sparrows were near Mosquito Ridge Rd., and Foresthill Rd., PLA, (EP, MF), and 10-

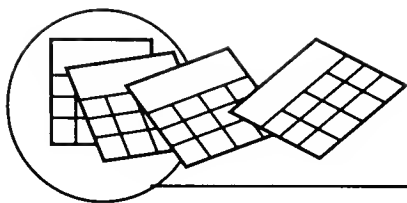
Wood Warbler Sightings			
<b>Blue-winged Warbler</b>			
June 2	Santa Rosa Flood Control Drainage, SON	CS, NW	
<b>Golden-winged Warbler</b>			
May 28	Blue Lake, HUM	S	
<b>Tennessee Warbler</b>			
June 5	Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN	RS	
June 9	BSOL, MTY	MPRBA	
June 19	Phipps Ranch, SM	RT	
<b>Virginia's Warbler</b>			
June 5	Wildrose Canyon, MON	PM	
<b>Northern Parula</b>			
May 30	Trinidad, HUM	I	
May 28-29	Fish Docks, PRNS, MRN	LH, KM	
June 5-6	Glen Canyon Park, SF	DSi, PS	
June 11-20 (2)	Near BSOL, MTY	MPRBA	
June 19-22	Hwy 1, south of Pacifica, SM	RT	
June 20	DN county location	B	
June 21-22	Off Hwy.1 near Casper, MEN	DT, RI	
<b>Chestnut-sided Warbler</b>			
June 5	B Ranch, PRNS, MRN	RS	
June 12-16	Gazos Creek Rd., SM	AR, AEi, MOB	
June 24	Rodman Slough Bridge, LAK (possible 2 <sup>nd</sup> county record)	JW,BM	
<b>Magnolia Warbler</b>			
June 2	Owl Canyon, SON	AW	
<b>Yellow-throated Warbler</b>			
June 19	Skyline Memorial Park, SM	RT	
<b>Palm Warbler</b>			
May 27	McKinleyville, HUM	I	
June 5	Loleta, HUM	I	
<b>Black-and-white Warbler</b>			
May 30	PRNS Lighthouse	HC	
May 31	Arroyo Leon Creek, SM	RT	
June 2	Mendoza Ranch, PRNS, MRN	EB	
June 5	B Ranch, PRNS, MRN	RS	
June 8	Lobos Creek, Presidio, SF	JC	
June 15	Pescadero Rd., SM	RT	
<b>American Redstart</b>			
June 17	Burley Murry S.P., SM	AJ	
June 22	Muir Beach, MRN	DM	
June 24	Scott Creek, MTY	TN, AK	
<b>Ovenbird</b>			
May 30	PRNS Lighthouse, MRN	HC	
June 5	Mt. Davidson, SF	DSi	
June 17	Little Horse Creek Study Area, SIS	PL	
<b>Mourning Warbler</b>			
June 12	Dennison Creek near Princeton, SM	RT	

12 were near Mt. Diablo State Park, CC, June 3 (JP). Four to five Black-throated Sparrows were singing off Peavine Rd., ED, May 30 (TE), and 3-4 were still there June 11 (SSB). A rare mountain location for a Sage Sparrow was Beckworth Calpine and Marble Hotsprings Rds., PLU, June 15 (ME, EPr). The only White-throated Sparrow report came from Arcata, HUM, June 1 (DF), while a very late Golden-crowned Sparrow was in Pacific Grove, MTY, June 5 (MRPBA). What was potentially the first pure Dark-eyed Junco of the "gray-headed" race in over 25 years in MRN Co. was at B Ranch, PRNS, MRN, June 5 (RS).

A female Northern Cardinal in a private yard in Novato, MRN, June 9, was probably an escapee (PW). Eleven Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were reported over HUM, MRN, MTY, SM, and SON counties. Three male Blue Grosbeaks were at Piper Slough, CC, June 3 (DW, SG), single birds were at Patterson Pass Rd., ALA, June 8 (Cortenay Peddle) and along Wise Rd., PLA, June 4 (EP), and there were at least 5 pairs near Byron, CC, June 24 (SG). Six Indigo Buntings were reported, with individual birds near the PRNS Fish Docks, MRN, May 28-29 (RL, KM), on Cloverdale Road, SM,

June 5 (RT), at Longridge Open Space, SM, June 14 (LC), on Mount Berdell, MRN, June 19 (RS), and two others at AMSP, MTY, June 20 (MPRBA).

The Great-tailed Grackle explosion continued unabated, with possible new breeding and county records being set during the period. The pair first seen at Shadow Cliffs Regional Park, ALA, on May 9 was still there May 27 (LT and OC), nesting was reported June 18 (MB, MF), and a fledgling was spotted June 24 (AE, GB). The pair at Roberts Lake, MTY, had nested by June 10 when one male and two females were in the area (MPRBA). At least one other Great-tailed Grackle was reported as far north as Arcata, HUM, June 5 (H, L). Another four or five pairs were nesting near the pond at Benton Hot springs, MON, June 4 (PM). On June 7, three males and one female were seen copulating at Bridgeport Sewage Ponds, MON. If they breed, this will be the furthest north and highest breeding site yet reported for Northern CA. (PM). And it goes on... Another Great-Tailed Grackle was at Antonelli Pond, Santa Cruz, SCZ, June 8 (SGe), and a male identified just inside the TUO county line off Hwy. 120 June 12 may be a first county record (MF).



September Meeting

# The Galapagos Islands

*The Enchanted Isles of Charles Darwin*

Escape this night into another entertaining evening with Michael Ellis, KQED Commentator and naturalist extraordinaire. Through the magic of Kodak, we'll travel south, 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador, right on the equator, and visit the Islas de Encantadas. The Galapagos Islands are the world's greatest laboratory for the study of natural history. Every person interested in the wild things of the planet must make at least one trip to this amazing place. Giant tortoises, marine iguanas, penguins, blue-footed boobies, lava lizards, sea lions fur seals and even the fish are friendly.

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September 16, 1999

7:00 p.m.

Northbrae Community Church

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Perspectives, a series on KQED FM radio and for CalNet, a syndicated news program for California's public radio stations. He was the host/naturalist on a natural history documentary on southeast Alaska for the Discovery Cable Channel.

Tonight is your night to experience the Galapagos Islands vicariously, with our special guest, Michael Ellis. Please join Golden Gate Audubon Society for this first meeting of our 1999-2000 program season.



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